



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## **Job Description for Coaches in Pennsylvania Coaching Initiatives**

### ***Role of the Coach***

The coach serves as part of their school's leadership team, providing job-imbedded and ongoing professional development for teachers, staff, and administration. He/she provides support to the principal in data analysis and professional development decision-making. He/she provides professional development and guidance for teachers to improve their content knowledge and instructional strategies. Overall, the job of the coach is to build the capacity of the school and its teachers to meet the learning needs of all students. The coach's goal is to ensure that school staff acquires the understanding and skills to:

- 1) enhance instructional practices at the classroom level and
- 2) raise the level of student achievement.

The effective coach spends the majority of the time working in classrooms with teachers (e.g. modeling, observing, co-teaching). The coach plays a very strong role in the analysis and utilization of student achievement data to impact instructional decision-making. He/she should not, however, be responsible for the administration of assessments, collection of assessment data, or management of data systems. The focus of coach's work is to help teachers learn to use data for instructional planning that will have a positive impact on student achievement. In that role, the coach helps the teacher learn how to administer and interpret various assessment tools.

The coach may facilitate teacher study groups in which they analyze student work and lesson plans and plan for the enhancement of instructional strategies. The coach's analysis of student work and teaching and learning data will inform what occurs during coaching sessions with individual teachers and in the teacher study groups.

The roles and responsibilities of the coach include:

- Participating in all required coach professional development. The coach is charged with acquiring the knowledge, skills, technology skills, and instructional strategies necessary to effectively impact the instructional practices of the teachers that are coached. He/she must remain knowledgeable about current and past research in the specific content area and other pedagogies relevant to the coaching role.
- Identifying school teaching and learning needs, barriers and weaknesses by analyzing student data, and organizing and implementing problem-solving actions with teachers;

- Facilitating school-based high quality professional development, working with teachers (in teams or individually) to refine their knowledge and skills. Professional development could include, but not be limited to, in-class coaching, observing, modeling of instructional strategies, guiding teachers in looking at student work, developing lesson plans with teachers based on student needs, supporting data analysis, supporting the integration of technology, co-planning with teachers, etc.;
- Monitoring instructional effectiveness and student progress using tools and strategies gained through professional development;
- Building and maintaining confidential relationships with teachers. The conversations and interactions that the coach has with teachers must always remain confidential so that a high level of trust is created and maintained between the teacher and the coach. Exceptions to this include imminent physical or psychological danger to the students

The coach reports directly to and is held accountable by the school principal or other appropriately certified supervisory personnel. He/she is evaluated annually through the same form as instructional staff (PDE-426, PDE-427, and PDE-428 or locally developed/PDE-approved form).

### ***Coach is Non-Supervisory***

The role of a coach is separate and apart from the evaluative role of the principal or supervisor of the teacher. The coach advocates for, facilitates, and supports the work of the teacher, but never performs supervision or evaluation. The coach should not confuse providing teachers with consultative feedback requiring professional judgment with supervisory or evaluative responsibilities of the principal. Evaluation, for example, includes completing the teacher evaluation forms PDE-426, PDE-427, and PDE-428. The role of evaluator is the sole responsibility of the principal or supervisor.

### ***Qualifications of the Coach***

The effectiveness of any coaching initiative hinges on the selection of a candidate that is highly qualified as a teacher, knowledgeable in content, and skilled in the sophisticated practices of coaching. Districts must select the coach that meets the following criteria:

- Pennsylvania Level II teaching certification in the relevant content area(s);
- Track record or evidence of improving student achievement in their classroom.
- Demonstrated deep knowledge of the relevant content areas;
- Demonstrated knowledge and use of a rich array of instructional approaches, resources, and technologies in the relevant content area(s);
- Demonstrated skills in analyzing and using data for instructional decision-making;
- Interpersonal, problem solving, and organizational skills required to effectively facilitate coaching and staff development;
- Ability to design and/or broker (individually or in collaboration with others) high quality professional development for teachers/school staff;
- Knowledge of equity issues in current education reform;
- Knowledge and skills to implement a standards-based education system and familiarity the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors.